212 language of a people cannot be artifically changed
185 and that the evolution of any language has to follow a natural course.[1] However, to combat illiteracy the Communists also see the immediate need of simplifying the Chinese written language. In this regard the government policy is based on Mao Tse-tung's statement in his On New Democracy that, "under certain conditions, the written language of China must be reformed."[2] Envisaged as the ultimate goal of language reform is the complete Latinization of the Chinese written language. In other words, the characters will be replaced by the Latin alphabet. Communist promoters of Latinization often cite Lenin's pronouncement that, "Latinization is the great revolution of the East"[3] in order to justify their argument.

● 198 The Communists are trying to cultivate a politically conscious proletariat in China. China's spoken language, as reflected in songs, plays, and speeches, is becoming more proletarian and drifting away from the set phrases and expressions traditionally used by the intellectual class. Extensive use of professional jargon and local expressions is the vogue of the day. Political terms and scientific terms, particularly those of Russian origin, are apparently on the lips of every Chinese who has had Communist indoctrination. It must be noted that the Communists, in adopting many new terms heretofore unfamiliar to the average Chinese, are aware of the danger of corrupting the language. The People's Daily of Peking (the Pravda of China), in an editorial

1. See quotation and discussion in Ts'ao Po-han, Yu-wen Wen-t'i P'ing-lun Chi [Critical Essays on the Language Problem], Shanghai, Tung-fang shu-tien, 1954, p. 95.

2. [next page]

on June 6, 1951, urged the use of correct Chinese and stressed the need for the study of grammar so that "the Chinese language will not become corrupt and impure."[4]

In the movement to eradicate illiteracy, the current trend is to promote accelerated methods of language teaching and to standardize and formalize many simplified characters already in use by the people in their handwriting. The Peking government is applying little effort, however, to the popularization of Latinized Chinese. One of the most publicized methods to accelerate language learning was introduced in 1948 by Ch'i Chien-hua, a cultural cadre attached to the armed forces. Ch'i champions the use of the "National Phonetic Symbols" (not to be confused with the Gwoyeu Romatzyh discussed in foregoing sections of this chapter) as the "walking stick" for new learners. The phonetic symbols are employed as a pronunciation aid to the students. This method was said to be so successful that the Peking government in May 1952 recognized Ch'i's contribution by inviting him to the capital and awarding him a citation.[5]

Simplification of written characters has been given official blessing. When the Committee on

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2. Mao Tse-tung, Mao Tse-tung Hsüan-chi [Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung], Vol. II, Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1952, p. 680.

3. John de Francis, Nationalism and Language Reform in China, Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 90.

4. Quoted in Jen-min Chiao-yü [People's Education], (Monthly), Peking, March 1955, p.28.

5. [see next page]